

34 *THE CASTAWAYS OF THE FLAG*

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though the second and third officers,
in defiance
of every sense of duty, connived at this
relaxing of
discipline. Robert Borupt, influenced by
his own
jealous and perverse nature, took no
steps to check
the disorder.

But the *Flag* continued to make her
way north-
east. On the 9th of September she
was almost in
the middle of the Indian Ocean, on the
line of the -
Tropic of Capricorn, her position
being 20° 17'
latitude and 80° 45 'longitude.

During the course of the previous
night symp-
toms of bad weather had appeared—a
sudden fall
of the barometer, and a gathering of
storm clouds,
both signs of the formidable
hurricanes that too
often lash these seas to fury.

About three o'clock in the afternoon a
squall goT¹
up so suddenly that it almost caught the
ship—a
serious matter for a vessel which, heeled
over to one
side, cannot answer to her rudder and is
in danger
of not being brought up again unless her
rigging is
cut away. If that is done, she is
disabled, incap-
able of offering any resistance to the
waves while
lying to, and is at the mercy of the
ocean's fury,

As soon as this storm broke the
passengers had,

of course, been obliged to keep their
cabins, for the
deck was swept by tremendous seas.
Only Frit
and Frank stayed on deck to lend a
hand with the
crew.

Captain Gould took the watch at the
outset, and^